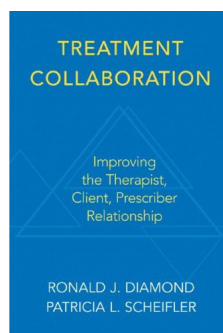


Treatment Collaboration - Improving the Therapist, Prescriber, Client Relationship. Ronald J Diamond & Patricia L Scheifler. Norton Professional Books, New York, May 2007. 208pp. £17.99. ISBN 978-0393704730

What an unusual book – I have just finished reading it, and find myself somewhat unable to describe what I have just read! If I were to liken the book to a piece of household equipment, it would be a large toolbox that contains some sort of tool for almost any job. Written primarily for the mental health setting, it contains helpful insights into the life of a mental health patient and enjoyable descriptions of issues in multi-disciplinary working. Its wide scope also includes recovery in mental illness, psychiatric presentation of medical illnesses, appropriate blood levels of mood stabilising drugs and, surprisingly, an appendix about diabetes.

Almost anyone who sits down to read this book – psychiatrist, physician, psychologist, patient, interested family member – will derive some benefit from it. It helpfully describes treatment collaboration and the possession of power and responsibility in a treatment team. By way of reviewer's paraphrase, prescribers carry a legal obligation toward the health of their patients and as such have power in the doctor-



patient relationship. The patient, on heading home, usually has the liberty and power to throw the prescription in the bin, showing decisive power. The therapist may know the patient better than any other team member, and thus has a heavy responsibility for the patient's well being, with the influence that carries.

Perhaps reflecting a lack of mental flexibility on my part, I found the presentation of the book a little annoying. Moving from one chapter to the next, I was at times distracted by wondering which of the authors had written which chapter, so different were they in style. Was the repetitive and slow-paced Chapter Four written by the Social Worker or the Professor of Psychiatry? Who authored the fast-flowing Chapter Five? The sudden appearance of summary boxes in the second-half of the book required further mental adjustment and the abrupt ending of the book was a disappointment. The reason for including an explanation of raised fasting triglyceride level in diagnosing diabetes caused me further head-scratching (is this an important diagnostic tool in mental illness that I am not aware of?). The turn-about style of the book, with one section written to professionals, the next written to patients, will demand further mental manoeuvring from the interested reader.

While perhaps deserving the description "Jack of all trades, Master of none", this book would be worthy of a place on most psychiatrically-oriented book shelves.

James Nelson